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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8120  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 5861  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 3741  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2233  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 6952  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0879  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4318  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 0545  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//  
INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 6688

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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND  
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBURGEOIS, DBENZE AND  
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER  
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC  
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E.O: 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Syria/Saudi Arabia,  
Syria/Lebanon, Golan, Palestinian Territories, Iraq (4/6)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers reported the meeting of Syrian Minister of Expatriates, Buthaina Shaaban with Emir Salman Bin Abed al-Aziz Al Saud, Emir of the Saudi city of Riyadh, who described the Syrian-Saudi relations as distinguished, and pointed out continuing consultations between the two countries in different regional issues. In an earlier meeting with Saudi Emir Al-Walid Bin Talal, Minister Shaaban stressed the significance of cooperation between both countries, calling on Saudi and Syrian businessmen to invest in Syria.

Syrian papers also featured a statement by Former Lebanese Minister Talal Arslan who said, "for a year, the current government has been unable to run the country and has failed at all economic, political and social levels."

End of summary.

¶2. Selected Headlines:

"Minister of Labor Haj Aref receives the UN fact-finding committee on conditions of Syrian workers in occupied Golan: Israeli repressive measures in occupied Golan continue without any international deterrent" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 4/6)

"Dr. Shabaan, Minister of Expatriates, confers with Emir Salman Bin Abed al-Aziz Al Saud, Emir of the Saudi city of Riyadh. Discussion focuses on bilateral ties between Syria and Saudi Arabia" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 4/6)

"The Lebanese Cabinet holds a meeting headed by President Lahoud to discuss the reform plan. Lebanese parties, circles and personalities call for enhanced relations with Syria and protection of the Lebanese resistance" (Government-owned Tishreen, 4/6)

"The Palestinian government holds its first meeting. Prime Minister Hanieh: We inherited a poor treasury. We are working to pay salaries of employees. Olmert will be announced Chairman of the Israeli cabinet today" (Government-owned Tishreen, 4/6)

"Pressures increase for Al-Jaffari. Al-Madi presents himself as an alternative" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th)

### 13. Editorial Block Quotes:

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"Deadly US Mistakes"  
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Isam Dari, a columnist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (4/6): "The US is implementing Israel's policy toward Arab issues instead of having its own independent policy...."

"Therefore, it is useless to imagine that the United States is willing to bring about a just and comprehensive peace in the region.... Moreover, the United States bases its policy on the assumption that the region's countries are hostile to Israel and that it has to pressure these countries...."

"We wonder how US Secretary of State Rice shamelessly acknowledges that her country has committed thousands of mistakes but does not apologize to the Iraqi people."

"The Bush administration is making thousands and even millions of mistakes in Palestine, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and other countries.... Bush also protects Israeli terrorism against the Palestinian people.... The nations of the world will hold the United States accountable for its mistakes sooner or later."

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"Occupation of Iraq, Failure and Absence of Horizons"  
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Ali Rahhal, a columnist in government-owned Al-Ba'th, wrote (4/6): "Research and studies that have been published on the Iraq war, indicate that the invasion of Iraq under false justifications was a grave mistake by the Bush administration...."

"The Iraq war has destroyed Iraq and its people and reflected negatively on US interests. Nevertheless the US Administration goes ahead with its mistakes, despite the increasing US losses and the American people's rejection of the war.... The US Administration is trying to impose its vision even though it is wrong.... Studies indicate that the current crisis in Iraq has not resulted from operations by terrorists or the resistance, but from the occupation's mistakes and the misconduct of the US Army...."

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"Occupation is Behind Increasing Sedition in Iraq"  
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Na'im Muhammad Qaddah, former Ambassador, comments in Al-Thawrah (4/6): "It is the US-made sectarian climate that has ignited the fire in Iraq.... Agents of US occupation bombed the holy shrine in the northern Iraqi city of Samarra, which was under the control of the US Army at the time of the bombing."

"Observers warn that certain circles in the United States are now calling for partitioning Iraq along ethnic and sectarian lines.... The atmosphere created by the US occupation has encouraged foreign intelligence services, such as Mosad, to interfere in Iraqi affairs."

"The bombing of the tombs of two imams in the city of Samarra is part of the US divide and rule policy.... The United States is seeking to trigger sectarian strife among Iraqi Arabs, who form about 80 percent of the Iraqi people and are known for their adherence to their Arab and Islamic heritage."

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## "Recent Elections Were Not Decisive"

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Ghassan Muhammad, a columnist in government-owned Al-Ba'th, wrote (4/6): "Israeli media organs have cast doubt on Ehud Olmert's plan to carry out a unilateral withdrawal from the West Bank.... Qadima has announced the plan in order to distinguish itself from the Labor Party and the Likud Party by pretending to accept a limited unilateral withdrawal from the West Bank.... The Labor Party is ready to accept such a plan through negotiations with Palestinians, while the Likud Party completely rejects the idea of withdrawal and insists on total control of the Palestinian territories...."

"This does not mean there is a difference between this or that Israeli party over withdrawal, which is used by Israeli parties as a political maneuver...."

"The idea of unilateral withdrawal was intended to win votes during the Israeli parliamentary elections.... Although Olmert believes that the occupation of Palestinian territories in 1967 was a mistake, he has no courage to translate his belief into action...."

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